

Careers in the Food and Nutrition Service

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE PROGRAMS

The mission of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to increase food security and reduce hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and needy people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Programs make wholesome low-cost lunches and breakfasts available daily to children in schools and institutions participating in these programs. Needy children can receive the meals free or at a reduced price.

The Special Milk Program allows all children attending a participating school or institution to buy milk at a reduced price or, if needy, to receive it free.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program runs year-round in non-residential institutions such as day care centers and nursing homes, Head Start centers, and family day care homes. Attending children and adults receive breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks.

The Summer Food Service Program for Children provides meals to children from low-income areas during extended vacation periods. Children at eligible institutions or summer camps get the meals free.

The Food Stamp Program enables low-income households to buy more food of greater variety to improve their diets. Participants get allotments of coupons or electronic benefit transfer cards, along with their available cash, for food in retail stores.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutritious foods to pregnant and breastfeeding women, and to children up to 5 years old. In addition, WIC offers participants an incentive to get health care and an opportunity to receive nutrition education. To be eligible, mothers' and children's health must be threatened by low income and poor nutrition. WIC foods are prescribed to meet participants' individual nutritional needs. Participants generally get vouchers to exchange for specific foods at retail food stores.

The Food Distribution Program donates foods to various food program outlets -- including schools, charitable institutions, nutrition programs for the elderly, summer camps, disaster relief agencies, and needy family programs on some Indian reservations.

The Nutrition Education and Training Program makes funds available to the States to provide nutrition information to children and in-service training to teachers and food service workers. The goal of the program is to help children understand the relationship between food and health.

CAREERS IN THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

A better diet means better health. FNS administers food assistance programs which make better diets possible for millions of Americans, particularly low-income Americans. The program offers participants access to wholesome foods and information about the relationship between foods and health.

Where you fit in. Local agencies, States and FNS share the responsibility for operating the food assistance programs. This means that local agencies serve program participants directly, and the States guide their local agencies' activities. Federal employees in FNS provide overall direction, administer the funds, and monitor program operation. If you want to apply your knowledge and skills to these food program administrative activities, there may be a challenging and rewarding career for you with FNS.

FNS employees work at the national Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, in seven regional offices, and in field offices across the country.

Federal Career Benefits:

- good salaries,
- opportunities for advancement,
- paid annual and sick leave,
- a retirement plan,
- health and life insurance options; and
- alternative work schedules.

In addition, FNS provides excellent opportunities for specialized training through its own facilities and outside resources. Career guidance and on-and off-the-job training programs are tailored to an individual employee's needs. Training programs are designed not only to help employees perform present duties, but also to prepare them for more difficult and responsible jobs.

For those who are hearing impaired, FNS has an on-site staff sign language interpreter, who provides interpreting services for applicants, employees, supervisors and managers located at Headquarters. If you need interpreting services, please contact the Human Resources Division.

CAREERS IN PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Program Analysts/Specialists:

- drafting the regulations and instructions that put program legislation into effect.
- approving the States' plans for operating the programs.
- developing national models and systems to improve program efficiency and effectiveness.
- developing training materials for State and local personnel and conducting training sessions.
- monitoring program operations.
- collecting and analyzing information to evaluate State and local program operation.
- responding to letters from the public requesting program information.
- conducting analyses and studies of program activities.
- communicating effectively with others in writing as indicated by the needs of the audience.
- understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- identifying the things that must be changed to achieve a goal.
- knowing how to find information and identifying essential information.
- identifying the nature of problems.
- talking to others to effectively convey information.
- finding ways to structure or classify multiple pieces of information.
- using logic and analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
- listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
- problem solving.

Investigators:

- plan and conduct confidential reviews of firms and persons suspected of committing Food Stamp violations.
- travel extensively.
- problem solving.
- ability to evaluate all possible investigative alternatives and data to develop the proper approach.
- work under cover.
- ability to communicate with law enforcement officials, and with other s.
- ability to accurately document information.
- ability to interview.
- ability to communicate accurately in writing.
- ability to conduct investigations.

Advancement: Positions are generally filled at the GS-5 and GS-7 grade levels with promotion potential to the GS-11 level based on performance, experience, and location.

CAREERS IN MANAGEMENT

Accountants:

- arrange financial operations to meet program objectives.
- provide financial advice.
- develop and review budgets and measure results against expectations.
- the ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.
- to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
- the ability to see details of objectives at a close range.
- the ability to understand and organize a problem and then to select a mathematical method or formula to solve problems.

Budget Analysts:

- the ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.
- formulate budget estimates for operating the programs.
- prepare, present, and support budget estimates.
- give testimony before examining, reviewing, and fund-granting authorities.
- the ability to understand and organize a problem and then to select the mathematical method or formula to solve the problem.
- the ability to understand information and ideas presented through spoken words or sentences.
- to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

Computer Specialists:

- design or put into effect systems for solving problems or accomplishing certain tasks by using computers.
- controlling computer functions by using programs, setting up functions, writing software, or otherwise communicating with computer systems.
- observing, receiving, and otherwise obtaining information from all relevant sources.
- providing information to supervisors, fellow workers, and subordinates. This information can be exchanged fact-to-face, in writing, or via telephone/electronic transfer.
- compiling, coding, categorizing, calculating, tabulating, auditing, verifying, or processing information or data.
- identifying underlying principles, reasons, or facts by breaking down information or data to separate parts.
- keeping up-to-date technically and knowing one's own jobs' and related jobs' functions.
- originating, inventing, designing, or creating new applications, ideas, relationships, systems, or products, including artistic contributions.
- entering, transcribing, recording, storing, or maintaining information in either written form or by electronic/magnetic recording, implementing ideas, programs, etc.
- problem solving.

Information Specialists:

- provide information about FNS activities to the general public and to specialized audiences through the most appropriate media.
- advise program administrators about the information needs for various audiences and how to best meet those needs.
- reading and understanding information and ideas presented in writing communicating information and ideas in writing and other methods so others will understand.
- to apply general rules to specific problems to come up with logical answers.
- to correctly follow a given rule or set of rules in order to arrange things or actions in a certain order.
- problem solving

Personnel Specialists:

- review staffing needs and place qualified candidates.
- classify jobs according to Government standards.
- handle the employee retirement plan, health and life. insurance programs, and employee grievances.
- establish employee training programs.
- listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- speak clearly so that it is understandable to a listener.
- communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
- weighing the relative costs and benefits of a potential action.
- motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
- generating a number of different approaches to problems.
- adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- problem solving

Management Analysts:

- develop, analyze, evaluate, and improve the effectiveness of work methods, organization, personnel utilization, delegations of authority, information and documentation systems.
- communicate information and ideas in speaking so that others will understand.
- speak clearly so that it is understandable to the listener.
- gather information.
- the ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong and solving the problem.
- listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- identifying the things that must be changed to achieve a goal.
- knowing how to find information and identifying essential information.
- identifying the nature of problems.
- finding ways to structure or classify multiple pieces of information.
- using logic and analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
- problem solving

Contract Specialists:

- develop and implement contracts, project grants, and cooperative agreements.
- negotiate and administer contract and procurement activities.
- ability to communicate in writing.

- ability to communicate orally.
- gather information
- analyze and evaluate information.
- problem solving.

Advancement: Most positions are filled at the GS-5, and GS-7 grade levels, with promotion potential to the GS-11 level based on performance, experience, and location.

Careers in Nutrition:

Dietitians, Nutritionists, Public Health Nutritionists, and Home Economists:

- give technical help to the programs in areas of food and nutrition.
- develop nutrition education materials.
- keep program specialists informed of significant developments in nutrition research.
- administer a national nutrition education and training program.
- develop guidance material.
- ability to communicate concerning nutritional information in written correspondence, reports, etc.
- to train persons on nutritional programs.
- ability to communicate orally with all types of people.
- ability to give technical assistance to include advisory, consultation, with respect to technical/regulatory aspects at issue.
- evaluate meal pattern requirements and review patterns for administrative feasibility with respect to food service systems.
- research by gathering information.
- analyze and evaluate information.
- problem solving

Advancement: Most positions are filled at the GS-5, 7, or 9 levels, with promotion potential to the GS-11 level based on performance, experience and location.

Careers as Typists and Office Automation Clerks

Typists and Office Automation Clerks:

- perform a variety of clerical and administrative jobs that assist supervisory personnel and support FNS program operations.

Qualifications: Candidates with a high school diploma or 3 months of comparable experience and an eligible notice of rating on the Clerical Examination for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area or for all other locations are considered for appointment. Additional experience or college education may qualify an applicant for the highest starting salaries for these jobs. For information about this examination, contact your Information Center at (912) 757-3000. The TTY number for nearest Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Job information is (912) 744-2299.

Advancement: Positions are filled at the GS-2, 3 or 4 levels for typists and office automation clerks. Based on performance and experience, office automation clerks can be promoted non-competitively to the GS-4 level. Through competition, those who meet education or experience requirements may be selected for higher secretarial, technical, or professional positions.

How to Apply Applicants interested in administrative positions at the GS-5 and 7 levels should contact the personnel office listed below for information on available positions. Candidates must have 3 years of experience in administrative, professional, technical, investigative, or other responsible work; or have completed 4 years of college; or have a suitable combination of experience and education. Applicants should contact the OPM Job Information Center for forms needed to apply for eligibility.

Candidates for specified job categories - including Accountants, Computer Specialists, Dietitians, Nutritionists, Public Health Nutritionists, Home Economists, Typists, and Office Automation Clerks must follow the application procedures given in specialized civil service announcements or vacancy announcements issued by agencies.

Applicants may contact the OPM Federal Job Information Center for OPM pamphlet OF-510, "Applying for a Federal Job" and the forms needed to apply for eligibility.

Call the OPM Federal Job Information automated telephone system (912) 757-3000 for any additional information or USAJOBS - OPM's website: **www.usajobs.opm.gov**

Applicants must submit an OF-612, Optional Application for Federal Employment, or a resume, or any other written format applicant chooses, or an SF-171, Application for Federal Employment to:

Headquarters:

**Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
Human Resources Division, Room 620
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 305-1474 VACANCY HOTLINE
TTY: USE RELAY SERVICE**

The Agency headquarters Human Resource Division services not only headquarters but also the seven regions in the area of recruiting and hiring applicants for FNS positions. Listed below are the FNS Regional offices and their locations. These offices administer FNS programs in the states listed following their address.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

**Mercer Corporate Park
300 Corporate Boulevard
Robbinsville, NJ 08691-1518
(609) 259-5078**

(Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virginia, West Virginia, Virgin Islands)

Northeast Regional Office

**10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222-1069
(617) 565-6379**

(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont)

Midwest Regional Office

**77 West Jackson Boulevard, 20th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-3507
(312) 353-1456**

(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)

Southeast Regional Office

**61 Forsyth Street SW, Room 8T36
Atlanta, GA 30303-3427
(404) 562-1889**

(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)

Mountain Plains Regional Office**1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 903****Denver, CO 80204-3581****(303) 844-0309**

(Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

Southwest Regional Office**1100 Commerce Street, Room 5-C-30****Dallas, TX 75242-9980****(214) 290-9824**

(Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

Western Regional Office**550 Kearny Street, Room 400****San Francisco, CA 94108-2518****(415) 705-1325**

(Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho,
Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Guam
Trust Territories, Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa)